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ABSTRACT

This publication presents the five building blocks of the American Bar Association's (ABA's) Special Committee on Law and Literacy's Three Year Advancement of Justice Plan. The first building block is the statement of shared values and beliefs that outlines why literacy is important to the association, profession, justice systems, and country. Next is the vision statement: a brief recital of the ABA's literacy vision for the nation. The mission statement that follows sets out what the Special Committee is attempting to achieve. A listing of the multiple, diverse constituencies served by this ABA endeavor follows. The plan then presents seven long-range goals and sets forth objectives under each goal. The goals are as follows: (1) increase adult basic education in all correctional settings; (2) support and promote literacy programs that deter crime; (3) encourage state and local bar associations to enter into law and literacy partnerships with the ABA; (4) develop regular communication with state and local bars; (5) work with the private sector to broker, establish, and promote public-private literacy initiatives; (6) use advocacy skills to make universal literacy a high public policy priority; and (7) "reinvent" the Special Committee as a Standing Committee. The concluding section presents Year One (1995-96), Year Two (1995-96), and Year Three (1996-97) Action Plans with yearly resource requirement estimates. (YLB)

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ED 381 627

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAW AND LITERACY
American Bar Association

THREE YEAR ADVANCEMENT OF JUSTICE PLAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Developed at a Special Committee Meeting
September 30 - October 2, 1994
Anacortes, Washington

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FOREWORD

...one does not plan and then try to make
circumstances fit those plans. One tries
to make plans fit the circumstances....

War as I Knew It
General George S. Patton, Jr.

The nation's literacy "circumstances" are ominous. Ninety million American adults have substantial literacy deficiencies. Up to seventy-five percent of incarcerated offenders and probationers are functionally illiterate. Illiteracy contributes - sometimes in large measure - to every major social distress that afflicts the country today. This modest three year financial outlay ($83,000 over the plan's tenure) will keep America's lawyers at the forefront of the literacy movement. Illiteracy will not go away unless the country works at it. Lawyers can continue to lead the movement to attain universal civic literacy and this plan, which addresses the realities of our present circumstances, shows how the ABA can do that.

THE PLANNERS

Special Committee members, advisors and the reporter who participated in the retreat that resulted in the production of this Three Year Advancement of Justice Plan, or who participated by reacting to various drafts of the Plan, include:

SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Charles H. Dorsey, Jr., Chair, Baltimore, MD
Executive Director, Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, Inc.

T. Maxfield Bahner, Chattanooga, TN
Private Practitioner

Eve Lynn Dubrow, Washington, DC
President, The Family Academy

John D. Ryan, Portland, OR
Private Practitioner

Honorable Lynn Tepper, Dade City, FL
Circuit Judge

Kathryn S. Marshall, Anacortes, WA
ABA Board of Governors Liaison

ADVISORS

Helen Jinx Crouch, Syracuse, NY
President, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.
Past Chair, The National Coalition For Literacy

Lennox McLendon
Virginia Director of Adult Education, Richmond, VA
Member of Executive Committee, The National Coalition For Literacy

Dick Lynch, Washington, DC
Staff Director and Reporter to the Committee
Immediate Past Chair, The National Coalition For Literacy

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BACKGROUND

The American Bar Association's Special Committee on Law and Literacy has been active in the national literacy movement since the Fall of 1986. It has achieved much during that time, and it has learned that much work remains to be done. At a meeting in Anacortes, Washington on September 30 - October 2, 1994, the Committee - with the assistance of an Advisor from the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education and the President of Literacy Volunteers of America, and with the active participation of its members and its Board of Governors Liaison - met in a retreat setting to distill its experience and to fashion a Three Year Advancement of Justice Plan.

Dissatisfied with the usual, year-to-year, budget driven planning process, the Special Committee set its sights on a more far reaching document. What follows are the five building blocks for the Special Committee's plan and each of the blocks is an integral part of the final action plan section.

The first building block is the statement of shared values and beliefs. This important section outlines the reasons why literacy is a subject of importance to our association, our profession, our justice systems, and our country. Next, flowing logically from the statement of shared values and beliefs, is our vision statement: a brief recital of the ABA's literacy vision for America. The mission statement that follows is a one sentence statement of what the Special Committee is attempting to achieve. These three bedrock portions of our plan are then followed by a listing of the multiple, diverse, and interesting constituencies served by this ABA endeavor. With the completion of these foundation sections, the plan then shifts to a recital of seven long range goals and sets forth objectives under each of the goals.

The concluding section presents Year One (1995-96), Year Two (1996-97, and Year Three (1997-98) Action Plans with yearly resource requirement estimates.

STATEMENT OF SHARED VALUES AND BELIEFS

- Literacy is essential to the attainment and effective administration of justice: illiteracy impinges on its attainment and hampers its administration;

- Literacy is essential to the maintenance of a free and peaceful society: illiteracy threatens freedom and contributes to conditions that breed violence;

- Literacy is essential to the maintenance of our democratic institutions: illiteracy cripples the functioning of those democratic institutions;

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- Literacy is essential to personal, political, and economic freedom: illiteracy constricts personal, political, and economic freedom;
- Literacy is essential for full participation as a citizen: illiteracy hampers that participation;
- Literacy diminishes disparities between genders, racial and ethnic groups: illiteracy exacerbates those disparities;
- Literacy facilitates the development of self-esteem: illiteracy engenders poor self-esteem;
- Literacy training should be part of the correctional regimen for incarcerated offenders and probationers: illiteracy is rampant within correctional populations;
- Literacy reduces joblessness and underemployment: illiteracy contributes to them;
- Literacy reduces juvenile delinquency: illiteracy contributes to it;
- Literacy reduces criminal recidivism: illiteracy contributes to it;
- Literacy reduces the incidence of teenage pregnancy: illiteracy contributes to it;
- Literacy reduces conditions which breed poverty: illiteracy contributes to poverty of pocketbook as well as spirit;
- Literacy is an essential skill in contemporary society: illiteracy is a major handicap;
- Literacy is essential to individual development and improvement: illiteracy impedes development and prevents improvement;
- Literacy and lifelong learning need to be family disciplines: illiteracy is intergenerational and prevents the formulation of such values;
- Literacy is the key to education and access to literacy training must be universally accessible: illiteracy will flourish until such access is universal;
- Literacy is the hallmark of a free and independent people: illiteracy, in contrast, is confining and constricting; and,
- The quest for universal literacy in America depends on the maintenance of a concerted, committed public-private leadership coalition involving organizations like the American Bar Association as well as traditional education organizations: illiteracy will prevail if that coalition falters or disintegrates.

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VISION STATEMENT

The ABA's literacy vision for America is that literacy programs will be accessible to all citizens and all who will become citizens; literacy training will be a mandatory part of all sentences to incarceration and probation; and, all correctional institutions will receive the necessary financial and educational assistance to build and deliver effective programs.

The ABA's literacy vision for America is based on our certain knowledge that illiteracy is one of the nation's most prevalent and serious social problems; illiteracy is a contributing factor to virtually every other serious social problem afflicting the nation; and, in spite of its prevalence and seriousness, illiteracy is a solvable problem.

Finally, the ABA's literacy vision for America is based on our firm conviction that the pursuit of universal literacy will be a national imperative.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Special Committee on Law and Literacy is to serve as the profession's leader and as a national catalyst to foster the full attainment of "civic literacy;" promote justice; reduce violence; reduce a host of social ills which all have illiteracy components; and, advance the concept of ordered liberty by promoting lifelong learning for all Americans.

CONSTITUENTS

In carrying out its mission and in striving to assist the ABA in reaching its long range goals, the Special Committee serves a wide range of individual and organizational constituents, including:

- ABA members, entities and governance units;
- State and local bar associations;
- The Judiciary;
- Lawyers;
- Criminal justice, juvenile justice, and correctional agencies;
- State Directors of Adult Education;

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- Educational Administrators at the federal, state and local levels;
- Public and private literacy provider agencies such as Laubach Literacy Action, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., National Center for Family Literacy, all public ABE (Adult Basic Education) programs;
- Public and Private Literacy Advocacy Organizations such as Project Learning U.S.; AAACE (American Association for Adult and Continuing Education), United Way of America, Association for Community Based Education;
- Community-based service organizations such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Optimists;
- Legislators and government decision-makers;
- All organizations working to vanquish illiteracy;
- Business and community leaders;
- The public;
- Parents;
- Children and all youth-at-risk; and,
- All who are, or were, illiterate.

STATEMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on our Statement of Shared Values and Beliefs - formulated by lessons learned during the Special Committee's literacy work within and outside the legal profession and the justice arena - and based on our Vision and Mission Statements, the Special Committee agrees that the American Bar Association, (utilizing the experience and the expertise of the Special Committee on Law and Literacy) should adopt the following seven literacy goals and the objectives set forth under each of these goals:

Goal One

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will employ its human, material, and moral resources to encourage meaningful increases in adult basic education in all correctional settings as a means of reducing recidivism.

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Objectives

1. Convene in the Spring of 1995, in cooperation with Probationers Educational Growth, Inc. of Florida, a major Southeastern Conference on Corrections and Literacy.

2. Commence research work in 1994-95 necessary to produce an ABA monograph on court related literacy programs (a counterpart to Lawyers For Literacy) by 1996.

3. By 1998 assist in replicating programs like Probationers Educational Growth, Inc. in 5 other states.

Goal Two

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will employ its material and moral resources to support and promote literacy programs that deter crime.

Objectives

1. Provide continuing assistance to the Young Lawyers Section of the New Orleans Bar to assist in making a Youth-at-Risk Literacy Program operational by August, 1995.

2. By 1998, create a national network of Youth-at-Risk Literacy Programs operated by Young Lawyers Sections.

3. By 1995-96 write and seek publication in the ABA Journal an article describing the special committees mission, shared belief, vision, goals and objectives.

Goal Three

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will exercise its leadership capacities to encourage state and local bar associations to enter into law and literacy program partnerships with the ABA.

Objectives

1. During 1994-1995 undertake cooperative literacy endeavors with the New York, Georgia, Arkansas and Virginia State Bars.

2. By 1998 establish a cooperative state bar literacy network with at least 25 states.

Goal Four

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will develop regular communication avenues with state and local bars to convey information regarding law and literacy.

Objectives

1. During 1994-1995 produce periodic information for state bar leaders which exemplifies the extent to which illiteracy is a component of, or contributes to, other major social problems impacting upon the nation's justice systems.

2. Create, by August, 1995 a formal network of state and local bar liaisons to the Special Committee utilizing, to the extent possible, existing law related education committees within the several states.

3. Begin publishing in 1995-1996 a Lawyers For Literacy Newsletter;

4. By January, 1996 include a descriptive "What Other Bars Are Doing" column within that Newsletter;

Goal Five

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will work with the private sector to broker, establish, and promote public-private literacy initiatives that help attack the social ills that plague America.

Objective

1. During 1994-1995 maintain working relationships with organizations such as the Points of Light Foundation, Capital Cities/ABC, Inc. (the sponsors of Project Learning, U.S.), Project NorthStar (The Homeless Children's Tutorial Project, Inc.); The Concerned Black Men, Inc., the National Council of La Raza, and the National Coalition For Literacy, to foster public-private partnerships.

2. In 1995-1996 seek to foster establishment of a workplace oriented literacy program for employees.

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3. In 1996-1997 seek the establishment of four additional workplace oriented literacy programs for employees.

Goal Six

The American Bar Association, through its Special Committee on Law and Literacy, will use its advocacy skills to make universal literacy a high public policy priority. In this regard, legislative initiatives should be undertaken at both national and state levels.

Objectives

1. Establish a formal liaison relationship with the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education by December, 1994.

2. Create, by the end of 1995-1996 a Lawyers Literacy Advocacy Directory listing lawyers in the several states who are willing to help literacy organization and distribute this Directory through the State Directors of Adult Education, Literacy Volunteers of America, Laubach Literacy Action, etc.

3. During 1995-1996 develop, in conjunction with national literacy organizations, a legislative advocacy agenda.

Goal Seven

To institutionalize its literacy work and to employ regularly the necessary expertise of literacy professionals, the American Bar Association will "reinvent" the Special Committee on Law and Literacy as an ABA Standing Committee on Law and Literacy.

Objective

1. Present, to the Program Committee, by March, 1995 a plan seeking the creation of an ABA Standing Committee on Law and Literacy to enable the association to strengthen its national literacy leadership position.

YEAR ONE (1995-96) ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan steps set forth below will advance the ABA's pursuit of long range goals IV, VI, I, III and X

1. Produce a Judicial Literacy Deskbook (a monograph on court related literacy programs) for publication by August, 1996 (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 2: estimated cost $9,000).

2. Broker replication of Florida's Probationers Educational Growth, Inc. in at least one additional state (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 3: estimated cost $2,000).

3. Create, in cooperation with Young Lawyers Section, a communications network of Youth-At-Risk Literacy Programs: Special Committee Goal Two, Objective 2: estimated cost $500).

4. Write, for publication in ABA Journal, article describing Special Committee's mission, vision, goals and objectives and relevance to the law (Special Committee Goal Two, Objective 3: estimated cost - none).

5. Create a state bar literacy network with 5 state bars involving state bar liaisons (Special Committee Goal Three, Objective 2 and Goal Four, Objective 2: estimated cost - $500).

6. Begin publication of a Lawyers For Literacy Newsletter and include a "what other bars are doing" section in this publication (Special Committee Goal Four, Objectives 3 and 4: estimated cost - $4,000).

7. Work with other organizations to foster creation of a workplace literacy program for employees in a private or government setting (Special committee Goal Five, Objective 2: estimated cost - none).

8. Create a national Lawyers Literacy Advocacy Directory for distribution to literacy organizations (Special Committee Goal Six, Objective 2: estimated cost - $3,000).

9. Hold two Special Committee meetings (estimated cost $8,000).

10. Present action proposals on literacy and the law to the House of Delegates (estimated cost - none).

Total Estimated Costs 1995-96 Action Plan - $27,000

YEAR TWO (1996-97) ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan steps set forth below will advance the ABA's pursuit of long range goals IV, VI, I, III and X

1. Distribute the Judicial Literacy Deskbook produced in 1995-96 to courts, judicial educational institutions and literacy organizations (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 2: estimated cost $500).

2. Broker replication of Florida's Probationers Educational Growth, Inc. in at least two additional states (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 3: estimated cost $2,000).

3. Expand, in cooperation with Young Lawyers Section, the communications network of Youth-At-Risk Literacy Program: Special Committee Goal Two, Objective 2: estimated cost $500).

4. Expand the state bar literacy network to 15 state bars involving state bar liaisons (Special Committee Goal Three, Objective 2 and Goal Four, Objective 2: estimated cost - $1,500).

5. Continue and expand distribution of a Lawyers For Literacy Newsletter and include a "what other bars are doing" section in this publication (Special Committee Goal Four, Objectives 3 and 4: estimated cost - $7,500).

6. Work with other organizations to broker creation of two additional workplace literacy program for employees in private or government settings (Special Committee Goal Five, Objective 2: estimated cost - $3,000).

7. Expand and update the national Lawyers Literacy Advocacy Directory for distribution to literacy organizations (Special Committee Goal Six, Objective 2: estimated cost - $4,000).

8. Hold two Special Committee meetings (estimated cost $8,000).

9. Present action proposals on literacy and the law to the House of Delegates estimated cost - none).

Total Estimated Costs 1996-97 Action Plan - $27,000

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YEAR THREE (1997-98) ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan steps set forth below will advance the ABA's pursuit of long range goals IV, VI, I, III and X

1. Distribute the Judicial Literacy Deskbook produced in 1995-96 to courts, judicial educational institutions and literacy organizations (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 2: estimated cost $500).

2. Broker replication of Florida's Probationers Educational Growth, Inc. in at least two additional states (Special Committee Goal One, Objective 3: estimated cost $2,000).

3. Expand, in cooperation with Young Lawyers Section, the communications network of Youth-At-Risk Literacy Programs: Special Committee Goal Two, Objective 2: estimated cost $500).

4. Expand the state bar literacy network to 25 state bars involving state bar liaisons (Special Committee Goal Three, Objective 2 and Goal Four, Objective 2: estimated cost - $2,500).

5. Continue and expand distribution of a Lawyers For Literacy Newsletter (Special Committee Goal Four, Objectives 3 and 4: estimated cost - $9,000).

6. Work with other organizations to broker creation of two additional workplace literacy program for employees in private or government settings (Special Committee Goal Five, Objective 2: estimated cost - $2,000).

7. Expand and update the a national Lawyers Literacy Advocacy Directory for distribution to literacy organizations (Special Committee Goal Six, Objective 2: estimated cost - $4,500).

8. Hold two Special Committee meetings (estimated cost $8,000).

9. Present action proposals on literacy and the law to the House of Delegates estimated cost - none).

Total Estimated Costs 1997-98 Action Plan - $29,000

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POSTSCRIPT

London, England - Social, economic and legal ramifications of illiteracy demand that lawyers become involved in literacy projects. As key opinion leaders, movers and shakers, the legal profession has an obligation to build "civic literacy" - the degree of literacy required for men and women to be responsible, productive, and fulfilled citizens, says a panel of Canadian, American and British experts.

Canadian Bar Association
Newspaper, Fall 1990

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